



News

SBA Number: 04-04

For more information contact:
Rena Carlson
441-1081

Release Date: October 14, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Bolstering Businesses in Rural America – One Community at a Time”

Montana SBA Office Ranked #1 in the Country

HELENA, MT --The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) impact on Montana's mostly rural economy can be felt in every corner of the state and across all 145,552 square miles. Businesses in forty-six of Montana's fifty-six counties benefited from SBA guaranteed loan financing this past fiscal year (10/1/02 – 9/30/03), boosting economies throughout Sheridan and Flathead Counties, well into Gallatin and over to Yellowstone County. This past year, entrepreneurs in 93 cities and towns throughout the state received a shot in the arm by SBA, fostering job creation and bolstering local economies. Cohagen, MT (population 8), a town where in 1948, the population drastically decreased and most of its buildings disappeared, was even home to an SBA guaranteed loan recipient – bringing a much needed business service to farmers and ranchers in this very, remote area of Montana.

SBA – By the Numbers:

The Montana District Office (MDO) of the SBA is located in Helena, MT and is one of 70 district offices nationwide. With a staff of only fifteen, the MDO serves entrepreneurs by providing financial, management, technical assistance, and training to emerging and established businesses throughout the state. During this past FY, the MDO staff alone counseled and trained 1,762 entrepreneurs. Based on agency performance goals, the MDO ranked #1 out of 70 offices (tied with offices in Arizona and Nevada), this past fiscal year (October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003). “The MDO staff are very dedicated and capable, and through teamwork reached and exceeded our office goals for FY 2003,” said District Director Michelle Johnston.

Montana's small business community makes up over 97% of businesses statewide, boosting Montana's economy one small business at a time. The reason SBA's guaranteed loan program is so successful in Montana is due to the responsiveness of Montana's lending community to small business. Currently there are 280 approved SBA participating lenders in Montana. This past fiscal year, 102 (or 37%) of those lenders utilized SBA's guaranteed loan programs. Seventy-eight (or 76%) of the lenders who took advantage of SBA's guaranteed loan programs were small, independently owned, community banks. “Although 55 (or 54%) of the lenders utilizing our loan programs made only one or two loans during the year, this indicates that SBA's guaranteed loan programs serve as a widely used tool for lenders, which in turn benefits Montana businesses,” said District Director Johnston. “Additionally, the average SBA guaranteed loan size this past fiscal year was \$151,151, down from \$200,510 a year ago,” added Johnston. “This means lenders are stretching their loan dollars, assisting more businesses, and aiding in Montana's recovery during this economically challenging time.”

-more-

Following is a summary of the MDO's guaranteed lending accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2003:

SBA guaranteed **495** loans totaling **\$78,357,341**. Of these loans, **478** for **\$72,250,341** were made through SBA's **7(a)** Guaranty Loan Program which provides short or long term financing for small business start-up or expansion needs. **Seventeen** loans totaling **\$6,107,000** were made through SBA's **504** Certified Development Company program which provides long term fixed rate financing for land, buildings and equipment.

SBA financed **157** new businesses for **\$16,711,625**. **Construction, Building and Contracting, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Ambulatory Health Care Services, Food and Drinking Places and Repair and Maintenance firms** were among the **most frequently financed** businesses during FY 2003. Of the 495 loans, **152** loans totaling **\$16,344,475** were made to **women** owned businesses, **63** loans totaling **\$10,146,900** were made to **veterans** and **28** loans totaling **\$2,381,000** were made to **minority** business owners.

(These figures **DO NOT** include participation in 504 CDC Financing)

Holding Companies Exceeding \$2.0 million in SBA Guaranteed Loans:

BANK NAME	BANK CITY	\$	#
Mountain West Financial Corporation	Helena	10,130,050.00	38
Yellowstone Holding Company	Columbus	9,477,900.00	66
Glacier Bancorp, Inc.	Kalispell	8,355,600.00	50
First Interstate BancSystem, Inc.	Billings	4,713,100.00	27
Butte Bank Shares, Inc.	Butte	4,686,300.00	12
Stockman Financial Corporation	Miles City	4,667,200.00	33
Wells Fargo & Company	San Francisco, CA	4,253,600.00	50
First National Bancorp, Inc.	Libby	2,760,000.00	16
United Financial Corp.	Great Falls	2,051,200.00	9
Bitterroot Holding Company	Lolo	2,023,500.00	10

Holding Companies Approving Ten or More SBA Guaranteed Loans:

BANK NAME	BANK CITY	\$	#
Yellowstone Holding Company	Columbus	9,477,900.00	66
Innovative Bank	California	649,000.00	65
Glacier Bancorp, Inc.	Kalispell	8,355,600.00	50
Wells Fargo & Company	San Francisco, CA	4,253,600.00	50
Mountain West Financial Corporation	Helena	10,130,050.00	38
Stockman Financial Corporation	Miles City	4,667,200.00	33
First Interstate BancSystem, Inc.	Billings	4,713,100.00	27
First National Bancorp, Inc.	Libby	2,760,000.00	16
Capital One Financial Corporation		485,000.00	14
Butte Bank Shares, Inc.	Butte	4,686,300.00	12
Montana Community Banks, Inc.	Ronan	1,789,440.00	10

-more-

Individual Lenders Exceeding \$2.0 million:

BANK NAME	BANK CITY	\$	#
Yellowstone Bank	Billings	\$8,079,000.00	55
Mountain West Bank, N.A.	Helena	\$6,515,200.00	21
Montana Community Finance Corporation	Helena	\$6,107,000.00	17
First Citizens Bank of Butte	Butte	\$4,686,300.00	12
First Security Bank	Missoula	\$3,933,600.00	16
Stockman Bank of Montana	Billings	\$2,379,700.00	21
First Interstate Bank	Billings	\$2,182,200.00	13

Lenders Approving Ten or More Loans:

BANK NAME	BANK CITY	\$	#
Innovative Bank	Oakland	\$649,000.00	65
Yellowstone Bank	Billings	\$8,079,000.00	55
Stockman Bank of Montana	Billings	\$2,379,700.00	21
Mountain West Bank, N.A.	Helena	\$6,515,200.00	21
Montana Community Finance Corporation	Helena	\$6,107,000.00	17
First Security Bank	Missoula	\$3,933,600.00	16
Valley Bank of Helena	Helena	\$454,800.00	15
First Interstate Bank	Billings	\$2,182,200.00	13
First Citizens Bank of Butte	Butte	\$4,686,300.00	12
Wells Fargo Bank Montana	Helena	\$1,075,500.00	11

Certified Development Company – 504 Loans

BANK NAME	\$	#
Montana Community Finance Corporation	\$6,107,000	17

Counties Exceeding \$1.0 Million in Loans:

County Name	\$	#
Yellowstone	\$14,738,750.00	113
Gallatin	\$13,524,250.00	50
Missoula	\$8,914,040.00	44
Lewis & Clark	\$6,857,300.00	47
Flathead	\$5,152,000.00	44
Silver Bow	\$4,335,000.00	18
Cascade	\$3,659,476.00	36
Ravalli	\$3,563,100.00	20
Jefferson	\$2,474,500.00	6
Stillwater	\$1,449,250.00	10
Richland	\$1,296,200.00	9
Park	\$1,187,000.00	3
Granite	\$1,175,950.00	3
Lake	\$1,101,800.00	9

-more-

Counties With Ten or More Loans:

County Name	\$	#
Yellowstone	\$14,738,750.00	113
Gallatin	\$13,524,250.00	50
Lewis & Clark	\$6,857,300.00	47
Missoula	\$8,914,040.00	44
Flathead	\$5,152,000.00	44
Cascade	\$3,659,476.00	36
Ravalli	\$3,563,100.00	20
Silver Bow	\$4,335,000.00	18
Stillwater	\$1,449,250.00	10

With the assistance of SBA resource partners located strategically across the state, including Small Business Development Centers, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, Business Information Centers, Tribal Business Information Centers and a women's business center, the MDO successfully delivers confidential counseling, training, management and technical assistance to emerging and existing business owners. This past year, through various workshops, one-on-one counseling, training sessions, networking, and e-mail counseling, SBA and its resource partners reached out to nearly 12,000 entrepreneurs! Without the hard work, dedication and commitment of our resource partners, this would not have been possible. Montana businesses are fortunate to have the multitude of free business assistance resources scattered throughout communities across Montana to assist them with their business ventures.

For more information on SBA programs and services, or to locate the nearest SBA resource partner, log onto www.sba.gov/mt or contact the Montana District Office directly at 1-800-776-9144 ext. 2.

As we celebrate 50 years of serving as *America's Small Business Resource*, we renew our commitment to delivering quality, customer oriented small business products and services to Montana's entrepreneurs for the next 50 years!

###